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# Bad Attitude Accompanied by Contrived Strawman Agendas in Attacks on Factually Objective Criticisms

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“If a man reads or hears a criticism of anything in which he has an interest, watch ... if he shows concern with any question except ‘is it true?’ he thereby reveals that his own attitude is unscientific. Likewise if ... he judges an idea not on its merits but with reference to the author of it; if he criticizes it as ‘heresy’; if he argues that authority must be right because it is authority ... The path of truth is paved with critical doubt, and lighted by the spirit of objective enquiry... the majority of people have resented what seems in retrospect to have been purely matter of fact ... nothing has aided the persistence of falsehood, and the evils resulting from it, more than the unwillingness of good people to admit the truth ... the tendency continues to be shocked by natural comment, and to hold certain things too ‘sacred’ to think about. ... How rarely does one meet anyone whose first reaction to anything is to ask: ‘is it true?’ Yet, unless that is a man’s natural reaction, it shows that truth is not uppermost in his mind, and unless it is, true progress is unlikely.” - Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Why Don’t We Learn from History?*, PEN Books, 1944; revised edition, Allen and Unwin, 1972.

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**Nige Cook** • 3 minutes ago

One more error. I quoted Edward Witten's 16 November 2006 letter in Nature v. 444, p. 265, arguing against the mainstream coming down from their high horses to engage in discussions with non-elitist critics:

"A direct response may just add fuel to controversies. Critics, who are often prepared to devote immense energies to their efforts, can thrive on the resulting 'he said, she said' situation."

What I should have also stated was that this is attitude of M-theorist Edward Witten is asymmetric, in other words his argument applies to the reigning theory, but not to newer alternative theories which are being suppressed and censored out by references to his (Witten's) "standard theory" of quantum gravity. Boiled down, all Witten's advice amounts to is the argument that critics (who claim that Witten's theory is based on elitism not objective evidence as compared fairly to all alternative theories) should be censored out to starve them of the little oxygen of publicity which they might gain from being allowed to engage in objective debates! Such techniques, in a parallel universe which did not contain Godwin, might be honestly called "dictatorship". Unfortunately, in the real universe, Godwin is a hero for claiming to have discovered a non-mechanism, non-scientific law which bans comparisons of quacks to eugenics.

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**Nige Cook** • 13 minutes ago

Sorry, I omitted this quotation about mainstream corruption and spin techniques in science: "... I was a little surprised when I was talking to a friend who was going to go on the radio. He does work on cosmology and astronomy, and he wondered how we would explain what the applications of this work were. 'Well', I said, 'there aren't any.' He said, 'Yes, but then we won't get support for more research of this kind.' I think that's kind of dishonest. If you're representing yourself as a scientist, then you should explain to the layman what you're doing - and if they don't want to support you under those circumstances, then that's their decision." - Richard P. Feynman on his friend Carl Sagan in "Q. I. M. F. ..."

"Surely You're Joking, Mr Feynman!", Vintage, London, 1992, page 343.

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